

Grants at a Glance
Construction Waste Demonstration Project
J.H. Findorff & Son, Madison, Wisconsin

Date Completed: December 31, 2004

Total Grant Amount: \$78,416

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Project Objectives

- Demonstrate the on-site separation of construction materials at a downtown building site with limited space.
- Facilitate the reuse and recycling of at least 35% of the construction materials.

Background/Challenges

Construction and demolition debris comprises as much as 46% of the waste stream in Dane County, Wisconsin, and construction waste recycling has the potential to greatly reduce the amount of solid waste being disposed of in local landfills. Very few building contractors are recycling construction waste, and may perceive space limitations as a reason not to try recycling on an urban construction site. This project attempted to address the challenge of space limitations and achieve a recycling rate of at least 35%.

Results/Knowledge Gained

Findorff achieved a 55% recycling and reuse rate on this project. Recycled and reused materials included concrete, wood, drywall, metal, cardboard, paper, commingled beverage containers, styrofoam, and polyurethane foam, totaling 1,970.1 tons. Over the course of the twenty-one month project, Findorff saved \$28,633, or 26% on disposal costs. This project demonstrated that construction waste recycling is feasible and cost-effective in the Madison area, and can make significant impacts to reduce the solid waste stream.

Sharing Knowledge

Findorff's recycling methods are adaptable to many other construction sites. In April 2003, Findorff and WasteCap Wisconsin hosted an Earth Day Talk & Tour at the construction site to show the recycling operations in action. Channel 27 and Channel 15 TV have publicized the recycling project, as have the Wisconsin State Journal and the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. The project has also had radio exposure, and other print media exposure. In January 2004, Findorff presented their work at the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin conference. A detailed report outlining the methods and results is posted at Findorff's web site, www.findorff.com, at WasteCap Wisconsin's website, www.wastecapwi.org, and at Madison Environmental Group's website, www.madisonenvironmental.com.

Summary

This project exceeded its recycling goal of 35% with a recycling rate of 55%. This project has shown that recycling can indeed be successful on a tight downtown commercial construction site. Findorff achieved this high recycling rate by implementing a well-designed recycling plan that was adapted from other construction sites. The recycling operations were cost-effective and contributed to environmentally responsible construction waste management.